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GENERAL INFORMATION

Coal Mine Fatal Accident 2003-16



Operator:	Mountain Spring Coal Company
Mine:	#1 Mine
Accident Date:	June 13, 2003
Classification:	Electrical
Location:	District 2, Beaver Co., Pennsylvania
Mine Type:	Underground
Employment:	32
Production	1,400 tons/day prior to being placed in BA Status on 6/11/03

OVERVIEW

Coal Mine Fatal Accident 2003-16

- The A 41-year old shift maintenance foreman (victim) with 15-years mining experience and two other maintenance foremen were working at a substation to resolve a mine power supply problem.
- The victim had pulled the three disconnects feeding power to a bank of capacitors located on top of the enclosed unit in the substation and had removed a fuse from the center disconnect.
- While kneeling on top of the enclosed unit, closing the fused disconnects, the victim came into contact with an energized 12,470 volt circuit.
- The cause of the accident was failure to de-energize the high voltage circuit prior to performing electrical work. The root cause was management's failure to establish and enforce safe work procedures. Contributing causes included the location of the main disconnects and the installation of the capacitor bank and capacitor bank disconnects.

ACCIDENT DETAILS

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- While working on the section, the victim identified a potential voltage imbalance problem on the miner.
- The mine maintenance foreman assisted the victim in checking voltages at various points along the power system, beginning in the section and working toward the outside.
- Upon reaching the surface, they still had not located the problem.

ACCIDENT DETAILS



ACCIDENT DETAILS



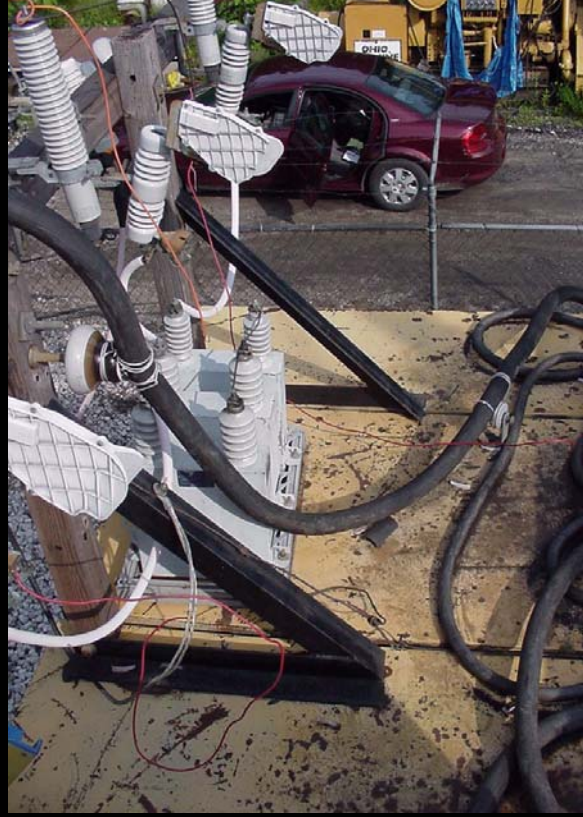
ACCIDENT DETAILS



ACCIDENT DETAILS



ACCIDENT DETAILS



PHYSICAL FACTORS

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- The electric company required an independent inspection of the site prior to power being placed on-line.
- As a result of this inspection, the main disconnects were raised from approximately 30 feet above the ground to approximately 40 feet above the ground.
- The hotstick used to open and close the main disconnects was 38 feet-10 inches long, making it very difficult to control.
- All three foremen were familiar with the design and installation of the substation. Although the victim was an underground shift maintenance foreman, he and the other maintenance foremen had previously performed work on the substation.

PHYSICAL FACTORS

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- In November of 2001, an independent contractor recommended that a capacitor bank be installed at the substation to improve the mine power factor.
- Mine personnel, including the victim, installed a capacitor bank on the roof of the enclosed unit.
- The capacitor bank was not secured to the roof.
- Because of the location of the capacitor bank disconnects, the capacitor bank had to be pushed forward 6 to 8 inches to allow removal of the fuse from the center disconnect.
- The victim used the hotstick to open the fused disconnects for the capacitor bank, but not to close them. This put him in close proximity to live unguarded parts.

PHYSICAL FACTORS



ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

- *Causal Factor:* The main disconnects for the substation were not opened and tagged out prior to electrical work being performed inside the substation.
- *Corrective Action:* A Gang Operated Air Brake Disconnect (GOAB) was installed 40 feet high on the pole, in series with the main disconnects.
 - The GOAB is operated by mechanical linkage located at ground level.
 - The GOAB will serve as the primary disconnect for the substation and is capable of being locked and tagged out.
 - A written safe work procedure requiring opening the main disconnects prior to performing electrical work in the substation was posted at the substation entrance.
 - All qualified electrical personnel will be retrained in safe work procedures in substations.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

- *Causal Factor:* The location of the main disconnects, 40 feet above ground, made the main disconnects very difficult to operate from the ground.
- *Corrective Action:* The GOAB was installed and is readily accessible.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

- *Causal Factor:* The location of the capacitor bank and capacitor disconnects required the victim to be exposed to unguarded live parts .
- *Corrective Action:* When and if the capacitor bank is reinstalled it will be completed in accordance with the National Electrical Code. The use of hotsticks shall be discussed in the retraining of qualified electrical personnel.

CONCLUSION

- The cause of the accident was failure to de-energize the high voltage circuit prior to performing electrical work.
- The root cause was management's failure to establish and enforce safe work procedures.
- Contributing causes included the location of the main disconnects and the installation of the capacitor bank and capacitor bank disconnects.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

- 104(d) (1) Citation for a violation of 30 CFR 77.501.
 - A maintenance foreman was performing electrical work in the mine substation without opening and tagging out the main disconnects.
 - This work consisted of operating disconnects, removing fuses and moving electrical components while in proximity to exposed energized electrical parts.
- 104(d) (1) Order for a violation of 30 CFR 77.704-9.
 - The disconnection switch on a high voltage surface line was operated without using an insulated stick which was adequately insulated and maintained to protect the operator from the voltage to which he was exposed.
 - The victim was observed closing a fused disconnect for the capacitor bank by hand while wearing high voltage gloves but not using an insulated stick.

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ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

- 104(d) (1) Order for a violation of 30 CFR 77.516.
 - The high voltage disconnects provided for the 23,000 to 12,470 volt transformer located in the surface substation did not comply with the 1968 National Electrical Code in that they were not readily accessible.
 - Article 100 of the NEC defines “Readily Accessible” as capable of being reached quickly for operation, renewal, or inspection, without requiring those to whom ready access is requisite to climb over or remove obstacles or to resort to portable ladders, chairs, etc.
 - The disconnects were mounted on an electric pole forty feet from the ground. The disconnects could not be reached quickly for operation.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

- 104(d) (1) Order for a violation of 30 CFR 77.516.
 - The high voltage capacitors installed on the roof of the enclosed unit in the surface substation did not comply with the provisions of the 1968 National Electric Code.
 - Article 710-34 (f) of the NEC states "Unguarded live parts above working space shall be maintained at elevations not less than required by the following table: Table 710-34 (f) Voltage between phases 11001 – 22000, Minimum Vertical Clearance of Unguarded Parts 9 foot 3 inches".
 - The high voltage capacitor disconnect switches were mounted 44 inches above the roof of the enclosed unit.
 - The capacitor bank and terminals were located below the disconnects.



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BEST PRACTICES

- De-energize and ground all high voltage phase leads when not necessary to perform work.
- Use properly inspected and maintained safety equipment.
- Perform electrical work on high voltage circuits by properly trained, qualified, and experienced persons.
- Maintain a working area free of extraneous materials.
- Develop a work plan that includes hazard analysis before conducting repair work.